

it is capable of accomplishing. We should not, therefore, conceal from ourselves that our resources in men are constantly diminishing, and the disproportion in this respect between us and our enemies, if they continue united in their efforts to subjugate, is steadily augmenting. The decrease of the aggregate of this army as disclosed by the returns affords an illustration of this fact. Its effective strength varies from time to time, but the falling off in its aggregate shows that its ranks are growing weaker and that its losses are not supplied by recruits.

Under these circumstances we should neglect no honorable means of dividing and weakening our enemies, that they may feel some of the difficulties experienced by ourselves. It seems to me that the most effectual mode of accomplishing this object now within our reach is to give all the encouragement we can, consistently with truth, to the rising peace party of the North.

Nor do I think we should, in this connection, make nice distinction between those who declare for peace unconditionally and those who advocate it as a means of restoring the Union, however much we may prefer the former.

We should bear in mind that the friends of peace at the North must make concessions to the earnest desire that exists in the minds of their countrymen for a restoration of the Union, and that to hold out such a result as an inducement is essential to the success of their party.

Should the belief that peace will bring back the Union become general the war would no longer be supported; and that, after all, is what we are interested in bringing about. When peace is proposed to us it will be time enough to discuss its terms, and it is not the part of prudence to spurn the proposition in advance merely because those who wish to make it believe, or affect to believe, that it will result in bringing us back to the Union. We entertain no such apprehensions, nor doubt that the desire of our people for a distinct and independent national existence will prove as steadfast under the influence of peaceful measures as it has shown itself in the midst of war.

If the views I have indicated meet the approval of Your Excellency, you will best know how to give effect to them. Should you deem them inexpedient or impracticable, I think you will nevertheless agree with me that we should at least carefully abstain from measures or expressions that tend to discourage any party whose purpose is peace.

With this statement of my own opinion on the subject, the length of which you will excuse, I leave to your better judgment to determine the proper course to be pursued.

I am, with great respect,
Your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

OPPOSITE WILLIAMSPORT,
June 25, 1863.

HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT DAVIS, RICHMOND,

MR. PRESIDENT: I have received to-day your letter of the 19th instant, and am much gratified by your views in relation to the peace party at the North. It is plain to my understanding that everything that will tend to repress the war feeling in the Federal States will inure to our benefit. I do not know that we can do anything to promote the pacific feeling, but our course ought to be so shaped as not to discourage it.

I am sorry to hear that any controversy has arisen in relation to the exchange of prisoners. That is a matter in which our enemies have an advantage over us. Although we may have more prisoners than they, theirs are maintained at less expense than ours. Moreover, our citizens are much more accessible to them than theirs to us, so that the system of retaliation, if commenced, will not be on an equal basis. Besides, I am not in favor of retaliation except in very extreme cases, and I think it would be better for us to suffer and be right in our own eyes and in the eyes of the world; we will gain more by it in the end. I hope, therefore, some plan may be adopted to prevent a course so repugnant to the feelings of humanity and the sense of right, and that the one you propose may be crowned with success.

You will see that apprehension for the safety of Washington and their own territory has aroused the Federal Government and people to great exertions, and it is incumbent upon us all to call forth all our energies. In addition to the 100,000 troops called for by President Lincoln to defend the frontier of Pennsylvania, you will see that he is concentrating other organized forces in Maryland. It is stated in the papers that they are all being withdrawn from Suffolk, and, according to General Buckner's report, Burnside and his corps are recalled from Kentucky. It is reasonable to suppose that this would be the case if their apprehensions were once aroused.

I think this should liberate the troops in the Carolinas, and enable Generals Buckner and Bragg to accomplish something in Ohio. It is plain that if all the Federal army is concentrated upon this [point], it will result in our accomplishing nothing and being compelled to return to Virginia. If the plan that I suggested the other day, of organizing an army, even in effigy, under General Beauregard at Culpeper Court-house can be carried into effect, much relief will be afforded. If even the brigades in Virginia and North Carolina, which Generals Hill and Elzey think cannot be spared, were ordered there at once, and General Beauregard were sent there, if he had to return to South Carolina, it would do more to protect both States from marauding expeditions of the enemy than anything else.

I have not sufficient troops to maintain my communications, and therefore have to abandon them. I think I can throw General Hooker's army across

the Potomac and draw troops from the south, embarrassing their plan of campaign in a measure, if I can do nothing more and have to return.

I still hope that all things will end well for us at Vicksburg. At any rate, every effort should be made to bring about that result.

With great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
Near Hagerstown, Md., July 8, 1863.

HIS EXCELLENCY JEFFERSON DAVIS, PRESIDENT, ETC.,

MR. PRESIDENT: My letter of yesterday will have informed you of the position of this army. Though reduced in numbers by the hardships and battles through which it has passed since leaving the Rappahannock, its condition is good and its confidence unimpaired. Upon crossing the Potomac into Maryland, I had calculated upon the river remaining fordable during the summer, so as to enable me to recross at my pleasure, but a series of storms commencing the day after our entrance into Maryland has placed the river beyond fording stage, and the present storm will keep it so for at least a week. I shall therefore have to accept battle if the enemy offers it, whether I wish to or not; and as the result is in the hands of the sovereign Ruler of the universe, and known to Him only, I deem it prudent to make every arrangement in our power to meet any emergency that may arise. From information gathered from the papers, I believe that the troops from North Carolina and the coast of Virginia under Generals Foster and Dix have been ordered to the Potomac, and that recently additional reinforcements have been sent from the coast of South Carolina to General Banks. If I am correct in my opinion, this will liberate most of the troops in those regions, and, should Your Excellency have not already done so, I earnestly recommend that all that can be spared be concentrated on the upper Rappahannock under General Beauregard, with directions to cross that river and make a demonstration upon Washington. This command will answer the double purpose of affording protection to the capital at Richmond and relieving the pressure upon this army.

I hope Your Excellency will understand that I am not in the least discouraged, or that my faith in the protection of an all-merciful Providence or in the fortitude of this army is at all shaken. But, though conscious that the enemy has been much shattered in the recent battle, I am aware that he can be easily reinforced, while no addition can be made to our numbers. The measure, therefore, that I have recommended is altogether one of a prudential nature.

I am, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
Bunker Hill, Va., July 16, 1863.

HIS EXCELLENCY JEFFERSON DAVIS, PRESIDENT CONFEDERATE STATES,

MR. PRESIDENT : The army is encamped around this place, where we shall rest to-day. The men are in good health and spirits, but want shoes and clothing badly. I have sent back to endeavor to procure a supply of both, and also horseshoes, for want of which nearly half our cavalry is unserviceable. As soon as these necessary articles are obtained we shall be prepared to resume operations.

. . . . I share in Your Excellency's regret for the fall of Vicksburg. It will be necessary for us to endeavor to select some point on the Mississippi and fortify it strongly, so that it may be held by a small garrison, which could be supplied with ammunition and provisions to enable it to stand a siege, thus leaving as many troops as possible free to operate against the enemy. I think that in this way a land-attack against such position as we may select can be prevented.

I am, with great respect, Your Excellency's obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

From a letter to the President, dated September 6, 1863, we select the following extract, with the President's reply :

As regards myself, should you think that the service will be benefited by my repairing to the Army of Tennessee, I will of course submit to your judgment. From your knowledge of all the circumstances of both armies you can come to a more correct conclusion than I can from my point of view. In my conversation with you on this subject when the question was proposed I did not intend to decline the service if desired that I should undertake it, but merely to express the opinion that the duty could be better performed by the officers already in that department.

RICHMOND, September 8 (1863).

GEN. R. E. LEE :

Have considered your letter, believe your presence in the Western army would be worth more than the addition of a corps, but fear the effect of your absence from Virginia. Did not doubt your willingness to do whatever was best for the country, and suggest your aid to determine that question. Have sent you all additional information to aid your further consideration of problems discussed with you here.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
Sept. 9, 1863.

SEDDON, HON. JAMES A., SECRETARY OF WAR, RICHMOND, VA.,

SIR: The letter of Governor Vance of North Carolina of Aug. 20th, with regard to the causes of dissatisfaction among the North Carolina troops in this army, with your endorsement, has been received. I regret exceedingly the jealousies, heartburnings, and other evil consequences resulting from the crude misstatements of newspaper correspondents, who have necessarily a very limited acquaintance with the facts about which they write, and who magnify the deeds of troops from their own States at the expense of others. But I can see no remedy for this. Men seem to prefer sowing discord to inculcating harmony. In the reports of the officers justice is done to the brave soldiers of North Carolina, whose heroism and devotion have rendered illustrious the name of the State on every battlefield on which the Army of Northern Virginia has been engaged. . . .

I believe it would be better to have no correspondents of the press with the army. . . .

I need not say that I will with pleasure aid Governor Vance in removing every reasonable cause of complaint on the part of men who have fought so gallantly and done so much for the cause of our country; and I hope that he will also do all in his power to cultivate a spirit of harmony, and to bring to punishment the disaffected who use these causes of discontent to further their treasonable designs.

I am, with great respect, yr. obt. servt.,

R. E. LEE,
General.

A letter to President Davis, dated Sept. 11, 1863, furnishes the following extract:

The defences around Richmond should now be completed as soon as possible. I did not see any connection or communication between the redoubts for the defence of Drewry's Bluff from a land-attack and the defensive line around Manchester. This is important, and also that there should be obstructions in the river connecting this intermediate line (as it was termed) on both sides of the river. Should the enemy's land forces drive us from Drewry's Bluff, they would remove the obstructions at that point, and, although we might be able to hold the intermediate line, his gunboats could ascend the river and destroy Richmond. I think, too, Colonel Gorgas should commence at once to enlarge his manufacturing arsenals, etc. in the interior, so that if Richmond should fall we would not be destitute. These are only recommended as prudent measures, and such as, should the necessity for them arise, we will then wish had been taken.

Copy of extract of letter from General Longstreet:

HEADQUARTERS, RICHMOND, Sept. 12, 1863.

GENERAL R. E. LEE, *Commanding*,

GENERAL: Henry's artillery has come down here, to my surprise. I have ordered, etc. . . . Anderson's brigade was so far on its way toward Charleston when your telegram got here that it could not be diverted, and fearing that if I sent Jenkins on to take his place General Beauregard would keep both, I concluded that the wisest and safest plan would be to put Jenkins's brigade in Anderson's place in Hood's division. It has been so arranged. I intended to have suggested before leaving you that our defences around Richmond be so arranged that we might (in the event we should be forced to give up Richmond) hold Drewry's and Chaffin's Bluffs with a garrison of 15,000 or 20,000 men until we could collect army enough here to retake Richmond. I suppose that we might hold our vessels here under the protection of these fortifications until we could recover the city. But if we should give up the river to the enemy, there will be but little prospect of our getting back the capital during the war. As I have never seen the positions of these bluffs, I don't know whether this arrangement is a practicable one. I hope to start West on Monday morning. If I can do anything there, it shall be done promptly. If I cannot, I shall advise you to recall me. If I did not think our move a necessary [one], my regrets at leaving you would be distressing to me, as it seems to be with the officers and men of my command. Believing it to be necessary, I hope to accept it and my other personal inconveniences cheerfully and hopefully. All that we have to be proud of has been accomplished under your eye and under your orders. Our affections for you are stronger, if it is possible for them to be stronger, than our admiration for you.

I remain, general, most respectfully and affectionately, your obedient servant,

J. LONGSTREET,

Lieutenant-general.

In a letter to President Davis, dated September 14, 1863, General Lee refers to affairs in the Western Department in a tone of some dissatisfaction with the depletion of his army:

Everything looks like a concentration of their [the Federal] forces, and it is stated by our scouts that they have learned of the large reduction of this army. I begin to fear that we have lost the use of troops here where they are much needed, and that they have gone where they will do no good. I learn by the papers of to-day that General Rosecrans's army entered Chattanooga on the 9th, and that General Bragg has retired still farther into the interior. It also

appears that General Burnside did not move to make a junction with Rosecrans, but marched to Knoxville. General Bragg must therefore either have been misinformed of his movements or he subsequently changed them. Had I been aware that Knoxville was the destination of General Burnside, I should have recommended that General Longstreet should be sent to oppose him, instead of to Atlanta. If General Bragg is unable to bring General Rosecrans to battle, I think it would be better to return General Longstreet to this army, to enable me to oppose the advance of General Meade with a greater prospect of success. And it is a matter worthy of consideration whether General Longstreet's corps will reach General Bragg in time and condition to be of any advantage to him. If the report sent to me by General Cooper since my return from Richmond is correct, General Bragg had on the 20th August last 51,101 effective men; General Buckner on the 20th August last, 18,118 effective men; he was to receive from General Johnston 9000 effective men; his total force will therefore be 76,219—as large a number as, I presume, he can operate with. This is independent of the local troops, which you may recollect he reported as exceeding his expectations. Should General Longstreet reach General Bragg in time to aid him in winning a victory and return to this army, it will be well; but should he be detained there without being able to do any good, it will result in evil. I hope you will have the means of judging of this matter and of deciding correctly.

To President Davis, September 18, 1863:

I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 16th instant. Should Generals Rosecrans and Burnside unite at Chattanooga, as now seems to be probable, and there fortify themselves, they will have, as you say, such vast means at their disposal as to render an attack upon that position by us extremely hazardous. I can see no other way, at this distance, of causing them to abandon that strong position than that which you suggest of attacking their line of communication. For this purpose their position will be favorable, for although from Stevenson two routes are open to the enemy, one to Memphis and the other to Nashville, from Stevenson to Chattanooga there is but a single route. General Bragg by concentrating his cavalry and sending it to cut the lines of communication beyond Stevenson will cause General Rosecrans to detach largely for its maintenance. Then by moving with his whole force upon a vulnerable point, according to the nature of the ground, he will in all human probability break up his position.

Lee to Davis, September 23, 1863:

I was rejoiced yesterday to learn by a despatch from the War Department of the complete victory gained by General Bragg. I hope he will be able to follow it up, to concentrate his troops, and to operate on the enemy's rear. I

infer from the accounts I have seen that Buckner had not joined him. Unless he is occupying a superior force to his own, he ought at once to unite with Bragg, that he may push the advantage gained. If that can be done, Longstreet can successfully move to East Tennessee, open that country, where Sam Jones can unite with him, and thence rejoin me. No time ought now to be lost or wasted. Everything should be done that can be done at once, so that the troops may be speedily returned to this department; as far as I can judge, they will not get here too soon. The enemy is aware of Longstreet's departure. They report in their papers the day he passed through Augusta, and give the position of Ewell's and Hill's corps. General Meade is strengthening himself daily. Our last scouts report the return of the troops sent North to enforce the draft. Nine trains loaded with troops reached Culpeper on Thursday night. Three trains arrived on Monday and three on Tuesday last, in addition to between four and five thousand marching.

HEADQUARTERS, ORANGE,
Sept. 25, 1863.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL J. LONGSTREET,

GENERAL: If it gives you as much pleasure to receive my warmest congratulations as it does me to convey them, this letter will not have been written in vain. My whole heart and soul have been with you and your brave corps in your late battle. It was natural to hear of Longstreet and Hill charging side by side, and pleasing to find the armies of the East and West vieing with each other in valor and devotion to their country. A complete and glorious victory must ensue under such circumstances. I hope the result will equal the beginning, and that General Bragg will be able to reoccupy Tennessee. I grieve for the gallant dead and mourn for our brave Hood. The names of others have reached me, but I hope the report of their fall may not prove true. Finish the work before you, my dear general, and return to me. I want you badly, and you cannot get back too soon. Your departure was known to the enemy as soon as it occurred. General Meade has been actively engaged collecting his forces, and is now up to the Rapidan. All his troops that were sent North have returned, and reinforcements are daily arriving. His cavalry and engineers are constantly reconnoitering, and a vigorous effort was made Monday and Tuesday to turn our left. We are endeavoring to maintain a bold front, and shall endeavor to delay them all we can till you return.

Present my sincere compliments and admiration to the officers around you, and accept for yourself and command my ardent wishes for the welfare and happiness of all.

Very truly yours,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
19th Oct., 1863.

LAWTON, BRIG.-GEN. A. R., QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL, RICHMOND, VA.,

GENERAL: I have received your letter of the 12th, and am very glad to find that your exertions to supply the army have been so successful. The want of the supplies of shoes, clothing, overcoats, and blankets is very great. Nothing but my unwillingness to expose the men to the hardships that would have resulted from moving them into Loudoun in their present condition induced me to return to the Rappahannock. But I was averse to marching them over the rough roads of that region, at a season too when frosts are certain and snows probable, unless they were better provided to encounter them without suffering.

I should otherwise have endeavored to detain General Meade near the Potomac, if I could not throw him to the north side.

The supplies that you now have at your disposal for this army will be most welcome, and I trust that your exertions to increase them will meet with full success.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
19 October, 1863.

SEDDON, HON. JAMES A., SEC. OF WAR, RICHMOND, VA.,

SIR: I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 16th inst. I am doubtful as yet whether General Meade will remain on the defensive. . . .

If General Meade is disposed to remain quiet where he is, it was my intention, provided the army could be supplied with clothing, again to advance and threaten his positions. Nothing prevented my continuing in his front but the destitute condition of the men, thousands of whom are barefooted, a greater number partially shod, and nearly all without overcoats, blankets, or warm clothing. I think the sublimest sight of the war was the cheerfulness and alacrity exhibited by this army in the pursuit of the enemy under all the trials and privations to which it was exposed. . . .

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
October 30, 1863.

HON. JAMES A. SEDDON, SECRETARY OF WAR, RICHMOND,

SIR: Your telegram directing a respite in the cases of Privates Newton and

Scroggins, Forty-first Virginia infantry, is received, and the order has been issued accordingly. At the same time, I beg leave to express my serious apprehension of the consequences of a relapse into that lenient policy which our past experience has shown to be so ruinous to the army, and in the end so much more cruel to the men. Early in the war it was found that stringent measures alone would keep the army together. After a few executions a number of men were pardoned, and the consequence was a recurrence of desertion to a most alarming extent. A return to a sterner discipline was found to be absolutely necessary, and by the executions that have taken place since the proclamation of the President, and by them only, has a stop been put to a spirit that was rapidly growing, that seized eagerly upon the slightest hope of escape from the consequences of crime, and that seriously threatened the existence of the army. A return to the lenient system that formerly prevailed will assuredly be productive of like results in the future, and render still harsher measures necessary hereafter if the army is to continue to exist. I fear that pardons, unless for the best of reasons, will not only make all the blood that has been shed for the maintenance of discipline useless, but will result in the painful necessity of shedding a great deal more. I hope I feel as acutely as any one the pain and sorrow that such events occasion, and I am sure that no one would more willingly dispense with them if they could be avoided; but I am convinced that the only way to prevent them is to visit the offence when committed with the sternest punishment, and leave the offender without hope of escape by making the penalty inevitable. It must be remembered that the punishment of death for desertion is inflicted almost exclusively for the warning of others, and no one without experience can conceive how readily the slightest prospect of escape is embraced.

I have felt it my duty to bring this subject strongly to your attention, as I am satisfied that in it, more than in any other, are involved the strength and efficiency of the army and its ability to cope with the enemy.

And I am further convinced that in a strict adherence to a stern discipline will be found the only means of avoiding the recurrence of these sad occasions.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS,
6 Nov., 1863.

LETCHER, HIS EXCELLENCY JOHN, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA,

GOVERNOR: At its late called session the Legislature made an appropriation for the relief of the families of soldiers. I find that there is great suffering among the people in this region for want of the necessaries of life. The farms and gardens have been robbed, stock and hogs killed, and these outrages com-

mitted, I am sorry to say, by our own army to some extent, as well as by the Federals. I hear of like destitution in Stafford, where the Federal army alone has been. Would it not be well to forward such supplies of flour and meat as can be obtained to Culpeper Court-house and Fredericksburg, with agents for its distribution to those soldiers' families in distress, so as to relieve their wants during the coming winter?

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
29th Nov., 1863.

DAVIS, HIS EXCELLENCY JEFFERSON, PRESIDENT CONFED. STATES, RICHMOND, VA.,

MR. PRESIDENT: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th inst., enclosing one from General Bragg. The enemy is in force in my front, and I shall necessarily be brief, but will give you the substance of the views which have suggested themselves to me after much previous reflection on the subjects referred to by General Bragg.

1. I think it a matter of the first importance that our armies now in the field shall be retained in service and recruited by wise and effectual legislation. This cannot be done too soon. The law should not be open to the charge of partiality, and I do not know how this can be accomplished without embracing the whole population capable of bearing arms, with the most limited exemptions, avoiding anything that would look like a distinction of classes. The exemptions of persons of particular and necessary avocations had better be made, as far as possible, by authority of the Department, rather than by special enactment. I think the general exemption of such persons by law is open to much abuse, and many escape service under color of it who are only nominally within the provisions of the law, and who can be taken into service without prejudice to the necessary production of the country. I also am of opinion that the skeleton regiments should be consolidated under the authority of the Department when necessary, and the provision should extend to all arms of the service. If possible, some prospective bounty should be provided for the men who have been, and will be again, retained in service.

As to the imperative necessity for retaining them, and adding sufficiently to their numbers to enable them to cope with the enemy, there can be no doubt, and all the constitutional power of Congress should be fully exerted for this purpose.

2. With reference to mounting the cavalry on Government horses, I should be glad if it could be accomplished, but do not see how the horses could be procured. It is difficult now to meet the wants of our artillery and transportation. But I think the law should invest the Government with complete authority for the time being over every horse mustered into service, and authorize the use of it in such manner as will most promote the public interests, providing at the same time proper compensation for the owners should it be found necessary to deprive them of the use of their horses. A cavalry soldier cannot perform the terms of his enlistment without a horse, and the Government should be able to control the horse on this ground; and to this extent at least I fully concur in what General Bragg says with reference to depredations, whether committed by cavalry or any other part of the army. Any legislation that can repress this evil would be most beneficial.

3. I am not in favor of increasing the pay of any officer, but think it would be well to allow rations and clothing to company officers and their servants (such as they may lawfully have), and to other officers of like rank and pay with company officers. I see no necessity to extend the law to officers of a higher rank.

4. I think that the evil of officers and men absenting themselves without leave should be provided against, as far as practicable, by legislation. The ordinary mode of punishing by court-martial does not effectually check it, and I do not think General Bragg exaggerates the extent of the practice. In the case of officers I think the law should vacate their commissions by its own operation and subject them to conscription.

5. In this connection I would call your attention to the evils that flow from the absence of officers permanently disabled. Regiments are frequently commanded by captains from this cause, companies by sergeants, and sometimes brigades by majors and lieutenant-colonels. Many officers are borne on the rolls who are unfit for service. It would be harsh to drop them, and yet they prevent the promotion of other officers and interfere with the efficiency of their commands. I would suggest the establishment of an invalid corps to which such officers might be transferred, retaining their rank and pay. This corps might be made useful in many ways and relieve troops fit for field service.

6. I concur in the remarks of General Bragg with reference to the rank of the chief staff officers of our armies and those of the personal staff of commanding generals. The number and rank of the latter should correspond with their duties. These officers have no opportunity of promotion, and their importance is not over-estimated by General Bragg.

7. If any change in our hospital system can diminish the vice of absence without leave, I think it should be made. I do not know the particular features of the system to which General Bragg refers. I think it very important in providing for the personal staff, which should be adequate to the wants of the

officer with whom they serve, that he should be strictly confined to the staff allowed by law.

Respectfully, yr. obt. servt.,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
December 3, 1863.

HIS EXCELLENCY JEFFERSON DAVIS, PRESIDENT CONFEDERATE STATES,
RICHMOND,

MR. PRESIDENT: I have considered with some anxiety the condition of affairs in Georgia and Tennessee. My knowledge of events has been principally derived from the public papers, and the impressions I have received may be erroneous, but there appears to me to be grounds to apprehend that the enemy may penetrate Georgia and get possession of our dépôts of provisions and important manufactories. I see it stated that General Bragg has been relieved from command, and that General Hardee is only acting until another commander shall be assigned to that army. I know the difficulties that surround this subject, but if General Beauregard is considered suitable for the position, I think he can be replaced at Charleston by General Gilmer. More force, in my opinion, is required in Georgia, and it can only be had, so far as I know, from Mississippi, Mobile, and the department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The occupation of Cleveland by the enemy cuts off General Longstreet from his base, and unless he succeeds quickly in defeating General Burnside he will have to retire either into Virginia or North Carolina. I see no reason why General Sam Jones should not be ordered to advance to his support, or at least to divert the attention of the column that is said to be moving on Charleston, Tennessee.

I have ventured to trouble Your Excellency with these suggestions, as I know how much your attention is occupied with the general affairs of the country, especially as the session of Congress approaches. I think that every effort should be made to concentrate as large a force as possible under the best commander to ensure the discomfiture of Grant's army. To do this and gain the great advantage that would accrue from it the safety of points practically less important than those endangered by his army must be hazarded. Upon the defence of the country threatened by General Grant depends the safety of the points now held by us on the Atlantic, and they are in as great danger from his successful advance as by the attacks to which they are at present directly subjected.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

RICHMOND, Dec. 5, 1863

GENERAL R. E. LEE, ORANGE COURT-HOUSE:

Could you consistently go to Dalton, as heretofore explained?

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
Rapidan, December 7, 1863.HIS EXCELLENCY JEFFERSON DAVIS, PRESIDENT CONFEDERATE STATES,
RICHMOND,

MR. PRESIDENT: I have had the honor to receive your despatch inquiring whether I could go to Dalton. I can, if desired, but of the expediency of the measure you can judge better than I can. Unless it is intended that I should take permanent command, I can see no good that will result, even if in that event any could be accomplished. I also fear that I would not receive cordial co-operation, and I think it necessary if I am withdrawn from here that a commander for this army be sent to it. General Ewell's condition, I fear, is too feeble to undergo the fatigue and labor incident to the position. I hope Your Excellency will not suppose that I am offering any obstacles to any measure you may think necessary. I only seek to give you the opportunity to form your opinion after a full consideration of the subject. I have not that confidence either in my strength or ability that would lead me of my own opinion to undertake the command in question.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
*General.*HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
8 Dec., 1863.

WALTON, HON. MOSES, and others,

GENTLEMEN: I have earnestly considered the petitions addressed to the Secretary of War and myself, and, deeply sympathizing in the sufferings of the citizens of Shenandoah, I wish I could see any way of securing them against the ravages of the enemy, the insults to their families, and the loss of their property. We cannot oppose an equal force to the enemy at all points. The safety of some must be hazarded that others considered more vital be defended. It would give me great pleasure to increase the force in the Valley; but unless this can be done by the citizens of that region I know not whence at this time it can be attained.

I have forwarded to the Secretary of War your petition, and have written to General Imboden to inquire whether he cannot make such a disposition of his

forces as to give greater protection to the lower Valley. I hope this may be done. . . .

I remain, with great respect, yr. obt. servt.,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
December 22, 1863.

MAJOR-GENERAL J. A. EARLY, commanding, etc.,

GENERAL: I telegraphed you to-day with reference to obtaining supplies for the army while the troops are in the Valley, and now write to explain my views more fully. I wish you to avail yourself of the present opportunity to collect and bring away everything that can be made useful to the army from those regions that are open to the enemy, using for this purpose both the cavalry and infantry under your command. I hear that in the lower Valley, and particularly in the country on the south branch of the Potomac, there are a good many cattle, sheep, horses, and hogs. Besides these, there is said to be a quantity of bacon, cloth, and leather, and all these supplies are accessible to and can be used by the enemy. I desire to secure all of them that it is in our power to get, and you will use your command for the purpose of keeping back the enemy while the work is being done. You will buy from all who are willing to sell, and where you cannot buy you must impress and give certificates to the owners. Of course you will not take what is necessary for the subsistence of the people, but leave enough for that, and secure all the rest of the articles named, and any others, such as shoes, horseshoes, and horseshoe nails, that you can get. While so engaged I wish you to subsist the troops on those supplies that are most difficult of transportation, such as bacon, potatoes, and other vegetables, which I hear can be had, sending back those that are easy to transport, such as cattle, particularly sheep and hogs. If you cannot get enough bacon and vegetables, you might use some of the sheep and hogs. You will understand that these instructions have no application to those parts of the country that are accessible to our ordinary agents engaged in procuring supplies. You will make requisition on Major Bell for such transportation as he can furnish, and also try to get additional facilities from the people. The cloth, leather, and other quartermaster stores should be collected as fully as possible, leaving of course enough for the wants of our people. Horses and cattle can be driven back at once. I write to Major Bell by this mail to assist you as far as he is able.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

P. S. You will give out that your movement is intended as a military one

against the enemy, and of course will do them all the harm you can. You will use all the troops, including those of Imboden and Gilmer, that you may require.

R. E. L.

HEADQUARTERS, January 2, 1864.

HIS EXCELLENCY JEFFERSON DAVIS, PRESIDENT CONFEDERATE STATES,
RICHMOND,

MR. PRESIDENT: The time is at hand when, if an attempt can be made to capture the enemy's forces at New Berne, it should be done. I can now spare troops for the purpose, which will not be the case as spring approaches. If I have been correctly informed, a brigade from this army with Barton's brigade, Pickett's division, now near Kinston, will be sufficient if the attack can be secretly and suddenly made. New Berne is defended on the land side by a line of intrenchments from the Neuse to the Trent. A redoubt near the Trent protects that flank, while three or four gunboats are relied upon to defend the flank on the Neuse. The garrison has been so long unmolested and experiences such a feeling of security that it is represented as careless. The gunboats are small and indifferent, and do not keep up a head of steam. A bold party could descend the Neuse in boats at night, capture the gunboats, and drive the enemy by their aid from the works on that side of the river, while a force should attack them in front. A large amount of provisions and other supplies are said to be at New Berne, which are much wanted for this army, besides much that is reported in the country that will thus be made accessible to us. The gunboats, aided by the ironclads building on the Neuse and Roanoke, would clear the waters of the enemy and capture their transports, which could be used for transportation. I have not heard what progress is making in the completion of the ironclads or when they will be ready for service. A bold naval officer will be required for the boat-expedition, with suitable men and officers to man the boats and serve the gunboats when captured. Can they be had?

I have sent General Early with two brigades of infantry and two of cavalry under Fitz Lee to Hardy and Hampshire counties, to endeavor to get out some cattle that are reported within the enemy's lines. But the weather has been so unfavorable that I fear he will not meet with much success. The heavy rain-storm will swell all the streams beyond fording, and the cold weather and snow in the mountains will present other obstacles. Many of the infantry are without shoes and the cavalry worn down by their pursuit of Averell. We are now issuing to the troops a fourth of a pound of salt meat, and have only three days' supply at that rate. Two droves of cattle from the West that were reported to be for this army have, I am told, been directed to Richmond. I

can learn of no supply of meat on the road to the army, and fear I shall be unable to retain it in the field.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
5 Jan., 1864.

NORTHROP, COLONEL L. B., COMMISSARY-GEN., RICHMOND, VA.,

COLONEL: Your letter of the 7th ult. reached here during my absence in Richmond. . . .

I regret very much to learn that the supply of beef for the army is so nearly exhausted. . . . No beef has been issued to the cavalry corps by the chief commissary, that I am aware of, for eighteen months. During that time it has supplied itself, and has now, I understand, sufficient to last until the middle of February. . . .

I cannot adopt your suggestion to employ the organization of your bureau to impress provisions. Neither the law nor regulations of the War Department, in my opinion, give me that power. . . .

I have the honor to be, with great respect, yr. obt. servt.,

R. E. LEE,
General.

[Confidential.]

CAMP ORANGE COURT-HOUSE,
January 16, 1864.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL J. LONGSTREET,

GENERAL: Your letters of the 10th and 11th instants were handed to me by Captain Gorse last night. I am glad that you are casting about for some way to reach the enemy. If he could be defeated at some point before he is prepared to open the campaign, it would be attended with the greatest advantages. Either of the points mentioned by you would answer. I believe, however, that if Grant could be driven back and Mississippi and Tennessee recovered, it would do more to relieve the country and inspirit our people than the mere capture of Washington. You know how exhausted the country is between here and the Potomac; there is nothing for man or horse. Everything must be carried. How is that to be done with weak transportation on roads in the condition we may expect in March? You know better than I how you will be off in that respect in the West. After you get into Kentucky I suppose provisions can be obtained. But if saddles, etc. could be procured in time, where can the horses be? They cannot be obtained in this section of country, and,

as far as my information extends, not in the Confederacy. But let us both quietly and ardently set to work; some good may result, and I will institute inquiries.

There is a part of your letter that gives me uneasiness. That is in relation to your position. Your cavalry, I hope, will keep you informed of any movement against you. After the completion of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad you will be able to retire with ease, and you had better be prepared in case of necessity. If the enemy follow, with the assistance of General S. Jones you may be able to hit him a hard blow. I would suggest that you have the country examined, routes explored, and strong positions ascertained and improved. There is some report of a projected movement of the enemy next spring by the route from Knoxville, and the abandonment of this to Richmond. It is believed that such a movement will be as successful as that by Grant on Vicksburg. As they have not been able yet to overcome the eighty miles between Washington and Richmond by the shortest road, I hope they will not be able to accomplish the more circuitous route. Not knowing what they intend to do, and what General Johnston can do, has prevented my recommending your return to this army. After hearing that you were in comfortable quarters and had plenty of provisions and forage, I thought it was best you should remain where you are until spring or until it was determined what could be done. I hope you will be able to recruit your corps. In reference to that, how would General Buckner answer for the command of Hood's division, at least until it is seen whether he ever can return to it? . . .

With kind regards to yourself and all with you,

I am, very truly yours,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY,
18th Jan., 1864.

LAWTON, BRIGADIER-GENERAL A. R., QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL, RICHMOND,

GENERAL: The want of shoes and blankets in this army continues to cause much suffering and to impair its efficiency. In one regiment I am informed that there are only fifty men with serviceable shoes, and a brigade that recently went on picket was compelled to leave several hundred men in camp who were unable to bear the exposure of duty, being destitute of shoes and blankets. . . .

The supply by running the blockade has become so precarious that I think we should turn our attention chiefly to our own resources, and I should like to be informed how far the latter can be counted upon. . . .

I trust that no efforts will be spared to develop our own resources of supply,

as a further dependence upon those from abroad can result in nothing but increased suffering and want.

I am, with great respect, yr. obt. servt.,

R. E. LEE,
General.

[Confidential.]

HEADQUARTERS, January 20, 1864.

MAJOR-GENERAL GEO. E. PICKETT, commanding, etc., Petersburg, Va.,

GENERAL: From all the information I have received, I think the garrison at New Berne can be captured, and I wish it tried, unless upon close examination you find it impracticable. You can use for that purpose Barton's, Kemper's, Corse's, and as much of Ransom's brigades as you can draw to that point. I shall send in addition Hoke's brigade from this army. General Hoke is familiar with the vicinity of New Berne, has recently returned from a visit to that country, and it is mainly upon his information that my opinion has been formed. He will hand you this letter and explain to you the general plan which at this distance appears to me the best. You can modify it according to circumstances developed by investigation and your good judgment. It is proposed that General Barton shall pass south of Trent River and attack the forces said to be stationed behind Brice's Creek, get possession of the railroad to Beaufort, cut off reinforcements from that quarter, and take the town in reverse. General Hoke will move down between the Trent and the Neuse, endeavor to surprise the troops on Bachelor's Creek, silence the guns in the star fort and batteries near the Neuse, and penetrate the town in that direction; Whitford's battalion, or such other force as may be designated, to move down north of the Neuse, occupy if they cannot capture Fort Anderson at Barrington Ferry, and endeavor to take in flank with the batteries the line south of the Neuse, so as to lighten Hoke's work. The night previous to the land-attack Colonel Wood of the navy with 200 men in boats will descend the Neuse and endeavor to surprise and capture the gunboats in that river, and by their aid drive the enemy from their guns. General Whiting will be requested on the day appointed for the attack to threaten Swansborough with the troops he has north of the Cape Fear, so as to fix the attention of the enemy at Morehead City, etc., and to co-operate otherwise in the general plan. Everything will depend upon the secrecy, expedition, and boldness of your movements. General Barton should move first, and be strong enough to resist any combination of the forces from New Berne and Beaufort. The cavalry had better accompany him to cut the telegraph and railroad, gain information, etc. General Hoke with his own brigade should move next, the force north of the Neuse to keep pace with him. Colonel Wood will attend to his part. If successful, everything in New Berne should be sent back to a place of security. In that

event, too, it is hoped that by the aid of the gunboats water-transportation can be secured, the enemy driven from Washington, Plymouth, etc., and much subsistence for the army obtained. I wish you therefore to follow up your success. It will also have the happiest effect in North Carolina and inspire the people. I propose Major Dearing for the command of the artillery of the expedition. With the two battalions of Longstreet's corps near Petersburg there should be twelve 10-pounder Parrotts and two 20-pounder Parrotts; two 20-pounder Parrotts will be sent from Richmond. At Kinston I understand there are four Napoleons and one 3-inch rifle. From Branch's battalion I hope you will get more rifle guns, of which, if possible, you should have about twenty and as many Napoleons as you desire. The guns and ammunition must be sent by railroad and the horses by the common route. See that you have a sufficiency of ammunition and subsistence. I wish you also not to interrupt the general travel of the railroad, but to use the empty trains going south for the transportation of troops, etc. When the day of attack is fixed notify General Whiting. If you have to use the telegraph, merely say, "The day is —;" name the day of the month—he will comprehend. Commit nothing to the telegraph that will disclose your purpose. You must deceive the enemy as to your purpose, and conceal it from the citizens. As regards the concentration of troops, you may put it on the ground of apprehension of an attack from New Berne. General Hoke will give out that he is going to arrest deserters and recruit his diminished regiments.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

[Confidential.]

HEADQUARTERS, 20th January, 1864.

HIS EXCELLENCY JEFFERSON DAVIS, PRESIDENT CONFEDERATE STATES,

MR. PRESIDENT: I have delayed replying to your letter of the 4th until the time arrived for the execution of the attempt on New Berne. I regret very much that the boats on the Neuse and Roanoke are not completed. With their aid, I think, success would be certain. Without them, though the place may be captured, the fruits of the expedition will be lessened and our maintenance of the command of the waters in North Carolina uncertain. I think every effort should be made now to get them into service as soon as possible. You will see by the enclosed letters to Generals Pickett and Whiting the arrangements made for the land-operations. The water-expedition I am willing to trust to Colonel Wood. If he can succeed in capturing the gunboats, I think success will be certain, as it was by aid from the water that I expected Hoke to be mainly assisted.

In view of the opinion expressed in your letter, I would go to North Carolina

myself; but I consider my presence here always necessary, especially now when there is such a struggle to keep the army fed and clothed. General Early is still in the Valley. The enemy there has been reinforced by troops from Meade's army and [by] calling down General Averell with his cavalry. I do not know what their intentions are. Report from General Early yesterday stated that Averell with his cavalry had started for Moorefield. I will, however, go to North Carolina if you think it necessary. General Fitz Lee brought out of Hardy 110 prisoners, 250 horses and mules, 27 wagons, and 460 head of cattle. He captured 40 wagons, but 13 turned over on the mountains and had to be abandoned. He had also to leave behind between 100 and 200 head of cattle. The difficulties he encountered were very great, owing to the extreme cold, ice, storms, etc. Nearly all his men were frost-bitten, some badly; many injured by the falling of their horses. He got within six miles of Paddytown, but could not cross the mountains, owing to the icy roads and the smoothness of his horses. He could take with him neither artillery nor wagons.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

[Confidential.]

HEADQUARTERS, ORANGE CO.,
Feb. 3, 1864.

HIS EXCELLENCY JEFFERSON DAVIS, PRESIDENT CONFEDERATE STATES,

MR. PRESIDENT: The approach of spring causes me to consider with anxiety the probable action of the enemy and the possible operations of ours in the ensuing campaign. If we could take the initiative and fall upon them unexpectedly, we might derange their plans and embarrass them the whole summer. There are only two points east of the Mississippi where it now appears this could be done. If Longstreet could be strengthened or given greater mobility than he now possesses, he might penetrate into Kentucky, where he could support himself, cut Grant's communications so as to compel him at least to detach from Johnston's front, and enable him to take the offensive and regain the ground we have lost. I need not dwell upon the advantages of success in that quarter. The whole is apparent to you. Longstreet can be given greater mobility by supplying him with horses and mules to mount his infantry. He can only be strengthened by detaching from Beauregard's, Johnston's, or this army. If I could draw Longstreet secretly and rapidly to me, I might succeed in forcing General Meade back to Washington, and exciting sufficient apprehension at least for their position to weaken any movement against ours. All the cavalry would have to be left in Longstreet's present front, and Jones would have to be strengthened. If the first plan is adopted, supplies will have at once to be accumulated at Bristol or along the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, ostensibly for Longstreet's present use. If the latter provision must be

made at Gordonsville and Richmond for this army. We are not in a condition, and never have been, in my opinion, to invade the enemy's country with a prospect of permanent benefit. But we can alarm and embarrass him to some extent, and thus prevent his undertaking anything of magnitude against us. I have ventured to suggest these ideas to Your Excellency for consideration, that, viewing the whole subject with your knowledge of the state of things East and West, you may know whether either is feasible or what else can better be done. Time is an important element to our success.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS, February 18, 1864.

HIS EXCELLENCY JEFFERSON DAVIS, PRESIDENT CONFEDERATE STATES,
RICHMOND,

MR. PRESIDENT: I have received the despatch forwarded to me to-day from General Longstreet requesting 10,000 men to ensure the capture of Knoxville. I have no information of the practicability of the plan. I think it may be assumed that its defences are stronger now than when it was last attacked, and an attempt to capture it by assault would not only be hazardous, but attended with great loss of life. To reduce it by approaches would require time, and, it seems to me at this distance, render necessary an army sufficient to defeat a relieving force that, now the railroad to Chattanooga has been opened, could be quickly sent from Grant's troops. If a movement could be made to cut off supplies from Knoxville, it would draw out the garrison; and this appears to me the wiser course. Could supplies be sent if troops were? For without the former the latter would be unavailing. I wrote to-day to the Secretary of War suggesting that Pickett's division be sent to him in the spring, and that a brigade of Buckner's now at Dalton be returned to its division at once. . . .

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
March 6, 1864.

HON. JAS. A. SEDDON, SECRETARY OF WAR, RICHMOND,

SIR: I have just received your letter of the 5th instant enclosing a slip from one of the Richmond journals giving an account of the recent attack upon that city, and a copy of some papers found on the dead body of Colonel Dahlgren disclosing the plan and purpose of the enterprise. I concur with you in thinking that a formal publication of these papers should be made under official

authority, that our people and the world may know the character of the war our enemies wage against us, and the unchristian and atrocious acts they plot and perpetrate. But I cannot recommend the execution of the prisoners who have fallen into our hands. Assuming that the address and secret orders of Colonel Dahlgren correctly state his designs and intentions, they were not executed, and I believe in a legal point of view acts in addition to intentions are necessary to constitute crime. These papers can only be considered as evidence of his intentions. It does not appear how far his men were cognizant of them, or that his course was sanctioned by his Government. It is only known that his plans were frustrated by a merciful Providence, his forces scattered, and himself killed. I do not think it is right, therefore, to visit upon the captives the guilt of his intentions. I do not pretend to speak the sentiments of the army, which you seem to desire. I presume that the blood boils with indignation in the veins of every officer and man as he reads the account of the barbarous and inhuman plot, and under the impulse of the moment many would counsel extreme measures. But I do not think that reason and reflection would justify such a course. I think it better to do right, even if we suffer in so doing, than to incur the reproach of our consciences and posterity. Nor do I think that under present circumstances policy dictates the execution of these men. It would produce retaliation. How many and better men have we in the enemy's hands than they have in ours! But this consideration should have no weight, provided the course was in itself right. Yet history records instances where such considerations have prevented the execution of marauders and devastators of provinces. It may be pertinent to this subject to refer to the conduct of some of our men in the Valley. I have heard that a party of Gilmer's battalion, after arresting the progress of a train of cars on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, took from the passengers their purses and watches. As far as I know, no military object was accomplished after gaining possession of the cars, and the act appears to have been one of plunder. Such conduct is unauthorized and discreditable. Should any of that battalion be captured, the enemy might claim to treat them as highway robbers; what would be our course? I have ordered an investigation of the matter, and hope the report may be untrue.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE.

[Confidential.]

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
March 8, 1864.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL JAMES LONGSTREET, commanding, etc., Greenville,
Tenn.,

GENERAL: I was in Richmond when your letter arrived, and have been so much occupied by the recent movements of the enemy that it is only to-day

that I can reply. I think the enemy's great effort will be in the West, and we must concentrate our strength there to meet them. I see no possibility of mounting your command without stripping all others of animals and rendering them immovable. If horses could be obtained for you, where are the forage and equipments to be procured? The former is not to be had nearer than Georgia. It could not be furnished by the railroad, and I do not think equipments could be impressed through the country. If you and Johnston could unite and move into Middle Tennessee, where I am told provisions and forage can be had, it would cut the armies at Chattanooga and Knoxville in two, and draw them from those points, where either portion could be struck at in succession as opportunity offered. This appears to me at this distance the most feasible plan; can it be accomplished? By covering your front well with your cavalry, Johnston could move quietly and rapidly through Benton, across the Hiwassee, and then push forward in the direction of Kingston, while you, taking such a route as to be safe from a flank attack, would join him at or after his crossing the Tennessee River. The two commands upon reaching Sparta would be in position to select their future course, would necessitate the evacuation of Chattanooga and Knoxville, and by rapidity and skill unite on either army. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the country to do more than indicate the general plan. The particular routes, passage of rivers, etc. you and Johnston must ascertain and choose. The condition of roads, etc. may oblige you to pass through the western portion of North Carolina, but this you can ascertain, if you do not already know, as well as the distances each column would have to traverse before uniting, their point of junction, time of marching, etc. The agents of the commissary department tell me there is an abundance of provisions and forage in Middle Tennessee, which is corroborated by individuals professing to know that country. But this should be investigated too. It is also believed by those acquainted with the people that upon the entrance of the army into that country its ranks will be recruited by the men from Tennessee and Kentucky who have left it. A victory gained there will open the country to you to the Ohio.

Study the subject, communicate with Johnston, and endeavor to accomplish it or something better. We cannot now pause. I will endeavor to do something here to occupy them if I cannot do more. I hope Alexander has joined you with his new commission. The promotion of the other officers of artillery was ordered as proposed during my last visit to Richmond. Walton retains his former position in the Washington battalion.

Wishing you all success and happiness, I am, very truly,

R. E. LEE,
General.

MILITARY CORRESPONDENCE OF GENERAL LEE DURING THE GRANT CAMPAIGN.

THE letters which follow cover the momentous period from the date of General Grant's taking command of the Army of the Potomac to the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia in 1865. During this period General Lee prepared no formal report of his operations, as in the case of his earlier campaigns. In this final campaign he was in the habit of sending brief despatches to Richmond relating any occurrences of importance. These very imperfectly replace official reports, and have the singular feature of understating, as a rule, the extent of the Confederate successes—a fact which detracts considerably from their historical value. Some few of them are here appended, but the letters which we deem it more important to give are those that relate to the general military interests of the Confederate States. In addition to their suggestions concerning military movements elsewhere than in Virginia, they yield many valuable side-glances into the difficulties under which General Lee labored, such as the dearth of provisions, clothing, and arms, the increasing desertions, the lack of recruits, the disaffection in certain sections of the country, and the rapid exhaustion of means of resistance to the North. In none of them does he show a symptom of despair or breathe a thought of giving up the contest. To the last he remained full of resources, energetic, and defiant, and ready to bear upon his shoulders the whole burden of the conduct of the war.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
March 30, 1864.

HIS EXCELLENCY J. DAVIS, PRESIDENT CONFEDERATE STATES,

MR. PRESIDENT: Since my former letter on the subject the indications that operations in Virginia will be vigorously prosecuted by the enemy are stronger than they then were. General Grant has returned from the Army in the West. He is at present with the Army of the Potomac, which is being organized and recruited. From the reports of our scouts the impression prevails in that army that he will operate it in the coming campaign. Every train brings it recruits, and it is stated that every available regiment at the North is added to it. It is also reported that General Burnside is organizing a large army at Annapolis, and it seems probable that additional troops are being sent to the Valley. It is stated that preparations are making to rebuild the railroad from Harper's Ferry to Winchester, which would indicate a reoccupation of the latter place. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad is very closely guarded along its whole

extent; no ingress or egress from their lines is permitted to citizens as heretofore; and everything shows secrecy and preparation. Their plans are not sufficiently developed to discover them, but I think we can assume that if General Grant is to direct operations on this frontier, he will concentrate a large force on one or more lines, and prudence dictates that we should make such preparations as are in our power. If an aggressive movement can be made in the West, it will disconcert their plans and oblige them to conform to ours. But if it cannot, Longstreet should be held in readiness to be thrown rapidly into the Valley if necessary, to counteract any movement in that quarter, in accomplishing which I could unite with him or he unite with me, should circumstances require it, on the Rapidan. The time is also near at hand when I shall require all the troops belonging to this army. I have delayed calling for General Hoke, who besides his own brigade has two regiments of another of this army, under the expectation that the object of his visit to North Carolina may yet be accomplished. I have heard nothing on the subject recently, and if our papers be correct in their information the enemy has thrown reinforcements into that State and the Neuse is barricaded just above New Berne. There is another brigade of this army, General R. Johnston's, at Hanover Junction. I should like as soon as possible to get them back.

I am, with great respect, your most obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ORANGE COURT-HOUSE,

April 2, 1864.

HIS EXCELLENCY JEFFERSON DAVIS, PRESIDENT CONFEDERATE STATES,

MR. PRESIDENT: I had a conversation with General Pendleton last evening, who gave me the result of his observations during his late visit to the Army of Tennessee. His report of the condition of that army, the buoyant spirit of the men, and above all the confidence reposed in their leader, gave me unalloyed pleasure. I regret the difficulties in the projected combination and movement of Generals Johnston and Longstreet. Those arising from the scarcity of supplies I can realize. Those arising from the features of the country, the strength or position of the enemy, I cannot properly estimate. They should be examined and judged by the commanders who are to execute the movement. As far as I can judge, the contemplated expedition offers the fairest prospects of valuable results within the limits of the Confederacy, and its success would be attended with the greatest relief. I hope the obstacles to its execution on being closely scanned may not prove insurmountable or may be removed by a modification of the plan. In the mean time, provisions might be accumulated at some suitable point, and if drawn from the country south or west of that point

they would always be convenient for the armies north of it. Other preparations might also be made, but if after a full consideration of the subject by General Johnston there should not be, in his opinion, reasonable grounds for expecting success, I would not recommend its execution. He can better compare the difficulties, existing to a forward movement with the disadvantages of remaining quiet, and decide between them.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS, April 5, 1864.

HIS EXCELLENCY JEFFERSON DAVIS, PRESIDENT CONFEDERATE STATES,

MR. PRESIDENT: All the information I receive tends to show that the great effort of the enemy in this campaign will be made in Virginia. Nothing as yet has been discovered to develop his plan. Reinforcements are certainly daily arriving to the Army of the Potomac. I cannot ascertain whence they come. Information was received on the 3d from two scouts, derived from citizens along the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, that the troops on the cars said they belonged to Grant's Army of Tennessee. A resident of Culpeper stated that the Eleventh and Twelfth army corps had returned there. I telegraphed to Generals Johnston and Longstreet to know if they were still in the West. I enclose their answers. Both seem to think they are in their front, but preparing to leave. The tone of the Northern papers, as well as the impression prevailing in their armies, go to show that Grant with a large force is to move against Richmond. One of their correspondents at Harrisburg states upon the occasion of the visit of Generals Burnside and Hancock that it was certain that the former would go to North Carolina. They cannot collect the large force they mention for their operations against Richmond without reducing their other armies. This ought to be discovered and taken advantage of by our respective commanders. I infer from the information I receive that Longstreet's corps is in the vicinity of Abingdon and Bristol. It is therefore in position to be thrown West or East.

Unless it is certain that it can be advantageously employed West for a speedy blow, I would recommend that it be returned to this army. The movements and reports of the enemy may be intended to mislead us, and should therefore be carefully observed. But all the information that reaches me goes to strengthen the belief that General Grant is preparing to move against Richmond.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS, April 12, 1864.

MR. PRESIDENT : My anxiety on the subject of provisions for the army is so great that I cannot refrain from expressing it to Your Excellency. I cannot see how we can operate with our present supplies. Any derangement in their arrival or disaster to the railroad would render it impossible for me to keep the army together, and might force a retreat into North Carolina. There is nothing to be had in this section for men or animals. We have rations for the troops to-day and to-morrow. I hope a new supply arrived last night, but I have not yet had a report. Every exertion should be made to supply the dépôts at Richmond and at other points. All pleasure travel should cease and everything be devoted to necessary wants.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE.
General.

HEADQUARTERS, April 15, 1864.

MR. PRESIDENT : The reports of the scouts are still conflicting as to the character of the reinforcements to the Army of the Potomac and the composition of that of Annapolis under General Burnside. I think it probable that the Eighth corps, which embraces the troops who have heretofore guarded the line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the intrenchments around Washington, Alexandria, etc., has been moved up to the Rappahannock, and that an equivalent has been sent to Annapolis from General Meade. Lieutenant-colonel Mosby states that the Eleventh and Twelfth corps, consolidated, have also been sent to General Burnside. But, whatever doubt there may be on these points, I think it certain that the enemy is organizing a large army on the Rappahannock and another at Annapolis, and that the former is intended to move directly on Richmond, while the latter is intended to take it in flank or rear. I think we may also reasonably suppose that the Federal troops that have so long besieged Charleston will, with a portion of their ironclad steamers, be transferred to the James River. I consider that the suspension of the attack on that city was virtually declared when General Gillmore transferred his operations to the St. John's River. It can only be continued during the summer months by the fleet. The expedition of the enemy up Red River has so diminished his forces about New Orleans and Mobile that I think no attack upon the latter city need be apprehended soon, especially as we have reason to hope that he will return from his expedition in a shattered condition. I have thought, therefore, that General Johnston might draw something from Mobile during the summer to strengthen his hands, and that General Beauregard with a portion of his troops might move into North Carolina to oppose General Burnside should he resume his old position in that State, or be ready to advance to the

James River should that route be taken. I do not know what benefit General Buckner can accomplish in his present position. If he is able to advance into Tennessee, reoccupy Knoxville, or unite with General Johnston, great good may be accomplished, but if he can only hold Bristol, I think he had better be called for a season to Richmond. We shall have to glean troops from every quarter to oppose the apparent combination of the enemy. If Richmond could be held secure against the attack from the east, I would propose that I draw Longstreet to me and move right against the enemy on the Rappahannock. Should God give us a crowning victory there, all their plans would be dissipated, and their troops now collecting on the waters of the Chesapeake would be recalled to the defence of Washington. But to make this move I must have provisions and forage. I am not yet able to call to me the cavalry or artillery. If I am obliged to retire from this line, either by a flank movement of the enemy or the want of supplies, great injury will befall us. I have ventured to throw out these suggestions to Your Excellency in order that in surveying the whole field of operations you may consider all the circumstances bearing on the question. Should you determine it is better to divide this army and fall back toward Richmond, I am ready to do so. I, however, see no better plan for the defence of Richmond than that I have proposed.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS, April 16, 1864.

GENERAL BRAXTON BRAGG, commanding Armies C. States,

GENERAL: I have received your letter of the 13th enclosing a copy of a communication from Colonel Gorgas in reference to the large proportion of artillery with this army. I have never found it too large in battle, and it has generally been opposed by about 300 pieces of the enemy of larger calibre, longer range, and with more effective ammunition. If, however, its equipment overtaxes the means of the Ordnance Department, or, as you suggest, its supply of horses cannot be kept up, that decides the question, and no argument on the subject is necessary. Taking the European standard of 3 guns for every 1000 men, based upon the experience of their wars, not ours, the number of guns in this army will fall short, provided the regiments are filled to the minimum allowed by law. I think Colonel Gorgas is correct in not adhering to this standard when the organizations recede from their maximum of strength. Taking his own standard and allowing 5 guns to each brigade, we ought to have 230 guns. Longstreet has 12 brigades, Ewell 13, Hill 14, and the cavalry (including the Carolina brigade being organized) 7 = 46 brigades. Taking Colonel Gorgas's statement as correct, which I have not time to verify, there

are in this army 197 guns; with General Longstreet, 27; and in the Washington Artillery (if full), 16 = 240. The excess is not large, but going back to the European standard we have 206 regiments. Taking the minimum and not the maximum of strength ($206 \times 640 = 131,840$), and allowing 3 guns for every 1000 men ($131,840 \div 3 = 439$ guns). Our aggregate present and absent would give us more. I differ from Colonel Gorgas in thinking that 20 guns are too much for the cavalry. In my opinion they are not enough. We should have a battery for each brigade, and a reserve battery for each division; the 7 brigades would require 7 batteries, and the 3 divisions 3 reserve batteries, making 10.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS, April 16, 1864.

GENERAL BRAXTON BRAGG, commanding Armies C. States,

GENERAL: I received last evening your letter of the 14th instant by the hands of Major Parker. I trust that the expedition in North Carolina will be attended with success, and that the troops in the department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida may be made available to oppose the combined operations of the enemy in Virginia. No attack of moment can be made upon Charleston or the southern coast during the summer months, and I think General Johnston can draw with impunity some troops from Mobile to him. Buckner's force, too, might be made available in some way; I fear, as he stands now, it will be lost to us. At present my hands are tied. If I were able to move with the aid of Longstreet and Pickett, the enemy might be driven from the Rappahannock and be obliged to look to the safety of his own capital instead of the assault upon ours. I cannot even draw to me the cavalry or artillery of the army, and the season has arrived when I may be attacked any day. The scarcity of our supplies gives me the greatest uneasiness. All travel should be suspended on the railroad until a sufficiency is secured. I can have a portion of the corn ground into meal for the army if it is sent to me. I do not know whether all can be furnished. The mills are mostly on the Rapidan, and consequently exposed if any movement takes place. It will also increase the hauling, which at this time I should like to avoid if possible. If the meal can be prepared in Richmond, it will be more convenient at this time. If it cannot, we can at least grind part of the corn if sent to us. If we are forced back from our present line, the Central Railroad, Charlottesville, and all the upper country will be exposed, and I fear great injury inflicted on us.

Most respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

STRENGTH OF THE ARMY PREVIOUS TO WILDERNESS CAMPAIGN.
Abstract from Return of the Army of Northern Virginia, GENERAL R. E. LEE commanding, for April 20, 1864; Orange Court-house, Va.

| COMMAND. | Present for duty. | | Aggregate present. | Aggregate present and absent. | Aggregate last return. |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------|--------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Officers. | Men. | | | |
| General staff | 12 | . . . | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| Staff | 16 | . . . | 16 | 19 | 17 |
| SECOND ARMY CORPS. | | | | | |
| LIEUT.-GEN. EWELL. | | | | | |
| Early's division* | . . . | . . . | 5,578 | 9,067 | 5,529 |
| Johnson's division | . . . | . . . | 6,383 | 10,405 | 6,294 |
| Rodes's division † | . . . | . . . | 8,733 | 13,292 | 8,729 |
| Total | . . . | . . . | 20,710 | 32,783 | 20,569 |
| THIRD ARMY CORPS. | | | | | |
| LIEUT.-GEN. A. P. HILL. | | | | | |
| Staff | . . . | . . . | 16 | 16 | 15 |
| Anderson's division | . . . | . . . | 7,910 | 11,991 | 7,809 |
| Heth's division | . . . | . . . | 8,502 | 14,349 | 7,951 |
| Wilcox's division | . . . | . . . | 8,963 | 12,646 | 8,946 |
| Total | . . . | . . . | 25,391 | 39,002 | 24,721 |
| Cavalry Corps. | | | | | |
| Maj.-gen. J. E. B. Stuart. | | | | | |
| Staff | . . . | . . . | 13 | 15 | 13 |
| Hampton's division | . . . | . . . | 3,815 | 8,192 | 3,358 |
| Fitz Lee's division | . . . | . . . | 5,872 | 8,715 | 5,599 |
| Total | . . . | . . . | 9,700 | 16,922 | 8,970 |
| Artillery Brigade. | | | | | |
| Brig.-gen. W. N. Pendleton. | | | | | |
| First army corps | . . . | . . . | 465 | 592 | 463 |
| Second army corps | . . . | . . . | 1,977 | 2,603 | 1,904 |
| Third army corps | . . . | . . . | 2,632 | 3,368 | 2,568 |
| Cavalry | . . . | . . . | 473 | 674 | 467 |
| Total | . . . | . . . | 5,547 | 7,237 | 5,402 |
| Unattached Commands. | | | | | |
| Valley District ‡ | . . . | . . . | . . . | . . . | . . . |
| Maryland Line | . . . | . . . | 913 | 1,351 | 887 |
| Provost Guard | . . . | . . . | 387 | 584 | 387 |
| Battn. Scouts and Couriers | . . . | . . . | 265 | 355 | 274 |
| Total | . . . | . . . | 1,565 | 2,290 | 1,548 |
| Grand total | . . . | . . . | 62,925 | 98,246 | 61,222 |

* Hoke's brigade detached; not reported. † Two regiments detached; not reported. ‡ Not reported.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
June 26, 1864.

HIS EXCELLENCY JEFFERSON DAVIS, PRESIDENT CONFEDERATE STATES,

MR. PRESIDENT: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th instant. General Hunter has escaped Early, and will make good his retreat, as far as I can understand, to Lewisburg. Although his expedition has been partially interrupted, I fear he has not been much punished except by the demoralization of his troops and the loss of some artillery. From his present position he can easily be reorganized and re-equipped, and, unless we have sufficient force to resist him, will repeat his expedition. This would necessitate the return of Early to Staunton. I think it better that he should move down the Valley if he can obtain provisions, which would draw Hunter after him, and may enable him to strike Pope (?) before he can effect a junction with Hunter. If circumstances favor, I should also recommend his crossing the Potomac. I think I can maintain our lines here against General Grant. He does not seem disposed to attack, and has thrown himself strictly on the defensive. I am less uneasy about holding our position than about our ability to procure supplies for the army. I fear the latter difficulty will oblige me to attack General Grant in his intrenchments, which I should not hesitate to do but for the loss it will inevitably entail. A want of success would, in my opinion, be almost fatal, and this causes me to hesitate, in the hope that some relief may be procured without running such great hazard.

I should like much to have the benefit of Your Excellency's good judgment and views upon this subject.

Great benefit might be drawn from the release of our prisoners at Point Lookout if it can be accomplished. The number of men employed for this purpose would necessarily be small, as the whole would have to be transported secretly across the Potomac where it is very broad, the means of doing which must first be procured. I can devote to this purpose the whole of the Marylanders of this army, which would afford a sufficient number of men of excellent material and much experience, but I am at a loss where to find a proper leader. As he would command Maryland troops and operate upon the Maryland soil, it would be well that he should be a Marylander. Of those connected with this army, I consider Colonel Bradley Johnson the most suitable. He is bold and intelligent, ardent and true, and yet I am unable to say whether he possesses all the requisite qualities. Everything in an expedition of this kind would depend upon the leader. I have understood that most of the garrison at Point Lookout is composed of negroes. I should suppose that the commander of such troops would be poor and feeble. A stubborn resistance, therefore, may not reasonably be expected. By taking a company of the Maryland artillery armed as infantry, the dismounted cavalry, and their infantry organization, as many men would be supplied as transportation could be procured

for. By throwing them suddenly on the beach with some concert of action among the prisoners, I think the guard might be overpowered, the prisoners liberated and organized, and marched immediately on the route to Washington.

The artillery company could operate the guns captured at the Point. The dismounted cavalry with the released prisoners of that arm could mount themselves on the march, and the infantry would form a respectable force. Such a body of men, under an able leader, though they might not be able without assistance to capture Washington, could march around it and cross the upper Potomac where fordable. I do not think they could cross the river in a body at any point below Washington, unless possibly at Alexandria. Provisions, etc. would have to be collected in the country through which they pass. The operations on the river must be confided to an able naval officer, who I know will be found in Colonel Wood. The subject is one worthy of consideration, and can only be matured by reflection.

The sooner it is put in execution the better if it be deemed practicable.

At this time, as far as I can learn, all the troops in the control of the United States are being sent to Grant, and little or no opposition could be made by those at Washington.

With relation to the project of Marshal Kane, if the matter can be kept secret, which I fear is impossible, should General Early cross the Potomac he might be sent to join him.

Very respectfully, your Excellency's obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

Abstract from Return of the Army of Northern Virginia, GENERAL R. E. LEE commanding, for July 10, 1864; Station near Petersburg, Va.

| COMMAND. | Present for duty. | | Aggregate present. | Aggregate present and absent. | Aggregate last return. |
|--|-------------------|------|--------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| | Officers. | Men. | | | |
| DEPARTMENT OF NORTH CAROLINA, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND VIRGINIA.* | | | | | |
| GEN. P. T. BEAUREGARD commanding. | | | | | |
| General staff | 12 | ... | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| Johnson's division | ... | ... | 8,403 | 13,681 | 8,478 |
| Hoke's division | ... | ... | 6,387 | 12,668 | 6,628 |
| Total | ... | ... | 14,790 | 26,349 | 15,106 |
| FIRST ARMY CORPS. | | | | | |
| LIEUT.-GEN. R. H. ANDERSON com'd'g. | | | | | |
| Staff | ... | ... | 17 | 24 | 17 |
| Pickett's division | ... | ... | 5,862 | 11,628 | 5,924 |
| Field's division | ... | ... | 5,952 | 12,943 | 5,846 |
| Kershaw's division | ... | ... | 5,791 | 11,646 | 5,712 |
| Total | ... | ... | 17,622 | 36,241 | 17,499 |
| THIRD ARMY CORPS. | | | | | |
| LIEUT.-GEN. A. P. HILL commanding. | | | | | |
| Staff | ... | ... | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| Anderson's division | ... | ... | 7,569 | 14,380 | 6,643 |
| Heth's division | ... | ... | 6,288 | 14,001 | 6,121 |
| Wilcox's division | ... | ... | 5,581 | 12,190 | 5,445 |
| Total | ... | ... | 19,455 | 40,588 | 18,226 |
| CAVALRY. | | | | | |
| Hampton's division | ... | ... | 3,570 | 8,967 | |
| Fitz Lee's division | ... | ... | 1,994 | 5,889 | 1,928 |
| W. H. F. Lee's division | ... | ... | 4,929 | 8,324 | 3,379 |
| Total | ... | ... | 10,493 | 23,180 | 5,307 |
| Of Gen. Beauregard's command | ... | ... | 1,180 | 1,622 | 1,247 |
| ARTILLERY. | | | | | |
| BRIG.-GEN. PENDLETON. | | | | | |
| First army corps | ... | ... | 1,919 | 2,637 | 1,838 |
| Second army corps † | ... | ... | 818 | 1,701 | 817 |
| Third army corps | ... | ... | 2,555 | 3,475 | 2,519 |
| Total | ... | ... | 6,472 | 9,435 | 6,421 |
| Grand total | ... | ... | 68,844 | 135,805 | 62,571 |

* The Second army corps, Lieutenant-general Early, detached; not reported.

† Part of artillery of Second corps with General Early; not reported.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
July 11, 1864.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL J. A. EARLY, commanding, etc.,

GENERAL: Your letter of the 7th was received this morning. Your movements and arrangements appear to me to have been judicious, and I am glad you did not delay to storm the works at Maryland Heights. It was better to turn them and endeavor to draw from them. I hope you get the Northern papers, as they will keep you advised of their preparations to oppose you. They rely greatly upon General Hunter's force coming in your rear. About the 4th instant, as far as I can judge, he was in the vicinity of Charleston on the Kanawha, with his own, Averell's, and Crooks's commands. To encounter you in your present position he must either ascend the Ohio to Parkersburg and take the railroad to Grafton, thence by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, if that is left practicable, or go up to Pittsburg, and thence by the Central Pennsylvania. You will be able to judge of the time that either of these routes will require to bring him in position, and I think that even his whole force, aided by such troops as might join him, would be unable to oppose you successfully.

I ascertained some days ago that on the 6th instant General Grant sent off a portion of his troops, and, as far as I am able to judge, they consisted of Ricketts's division of the Sixth corps, and their destination was Washington City. I think it probable that about a brigade of cavalry without their horses were sent on the night of the 6th to the same point. I learn this morning from our scouts on the James River that about the same number of troops, judging from the transports, descended the river yesterday, and I presume they are bound for Washington City. Whether these belong to the Sixth corps or have been taken from other corps of his army, which I think more probable, I have not yet ascertained. We may, however, assume that a corps or its equivalent has been sent by General Grant to Washington, and I send a special messenger to apprise you of this fact, that you may be on your guard and take this force into consideration with others that may be brought to oppose you. In your further operations you must of course be guided by the circumstances by which you are surrounded and the information you may be able to collect, and must not consider yourself committed to any particular line of conduct, but be governed by your good judgment. Should you find yourself obliged, in consequence of the forces opposed to you, to return to the south side of the Potomac, you can take advantage of the fords east of the Blue Ridge, keeping your cavalry well to your front and causing them to retire by fords between you and Washington. In the event of your recrossing the Potomac, your route through Loudoun will facilitate the procurement of provisions, forage, etc. for your command, and will be otherwise most advantageous, giving you a strong country through which to pass, and enabling you, if pressed, to retire into the Valley

and threaten and hang upon the enemy's flank should he push on toward Richmond.

I recommend that you have the fords of the Potomac examined by a competent officer, and held by a small force of cavalry or infantry as you may deem most advisable.

I can tell nothing further of the expedition mentioned to you in my letter of the 3d instant than was stated in that letter, having heard nothing from it since, except that the subject was a matter of general conversation in Richmond, which may tend to frustrate it.

You can retain the special messenger until you may wish to send him back for any purpose. I need not state to you the advantage of striking at the bodies of troops that may be collected to oppose you in detail before they are enabled to unite. None of the forces that I have mentioned, nor any reported in the Northern papers as being likely to oppose you, will be able, in my opinion, to resist you, provided you can strike them before they are strengthened by others. Should you hear of the near approach of General Hunter, and can strike at him before he is reinforced by troops from the East, you can easily remove that obstacle from your path, in my opinion.

Trusting you and our cause to the care of a merciful Providence, I remain,
Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
Petersburg, Va., August 4, 1864.

MR. PRESIDENT: A scout reported that on Sunday, the 31st ultimo, a body of cavalry estimated at two brigades moved toward the James River in the direction of City Point, and this may be the force of cavalry which has been shipped North. I fear that this force is intended to operate against General Early, and when added to that already opposed to him may be more than he can manage. Their object may be to drive him out of the Valley and complete the devastation they commenced when they were ejected from it. General Grant's plan of operations here appears to be to mine and bombard our lines with a view of driving us from them, and as he is very strongly fortified he can operate with fewer troops and enable him to detach a sufficient force for the purpose indicated. The largest force which I can detach would be Kershaw's and Field's divisions, and that would leave not a man out of the trenches for any emergency which might arise. If it is their intention to endeavor to overwhelm Early, I think it better to detach these troops than to

hazard his destruction and that of our railroads, etc. north of Richmond, and therefore submit the question to the better judgment of Your Excellency. . . .

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
August 26, 1864.

GENERAL EARLY,

GENERAL : Your letter of the 23d has been received, and I am much pleased at your having forced the enemy back to Harper's Ferry. This will give protection to the Valley and arrest the travel on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. It will, however, have little or no effect upon Grant's operations or prevent reinforcements being sent to him. If Sheridan's force is as large as you suppose, I do not know that you could operate to advantage north of the Potomac. Either Anderson's troops or a portion of yours might, however, be detached to destroy the railroad west of Charlestown, and Fitz Lee might send a portion of his cavalry to cross the Potomac east of the Blue Ridge, as you propose. I cannot detach at present more cavalry from this army; the enemy is too strong in that arm. I am aware that Anderson is the ranking officer, but I apprehend no difficulty on that score. I first intended him to threaten the enemy east of the Blue Ridge, so as to retain near Washington a portion of the enemy's forces. He crossed the mountains at your suggestion, and I think properly. If his troops are not wanted there, he could cross into Loudoun or Fauquier and return to Culpeper. It would add force to the movement of cavalry east of the Blue Ridge. I am in great need of his troops, and if they can be spared from the Valley or cannot operate to advantage there, I will order them back to Richmond. Let me know.

Very respectfully,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
September 2, 1864.

HIS EXCELLENCY JEFFERSON DAVIS, PRESIDENT CONFEDERATE STATES,

MR. PRESIDENT: I beg leave to call your attention to the importance of immediate and vigorous measures to increase the strength of our armies, and to some suggestions as to the mode of doing it. The necessity is now great, and will soon be augmented by the results of the coming draft in the United States. As matters now stand, we have no troops disposable to meet movements of the enemy or strike when opportunity presents, without taking them from the trenches and exposing some important point. The enemy's position enables him to move his troops to the right or left without our knowledge until he has reached the point at which he aims, and we are then compelled to hurry our men to meet him, incurring the risk of being too late to check his progress, and the additional risk of the advantage he may derive from their absence. This was fully illustrated in the late demonstration north of the James River, which called troops from our lines here who, if present, might have prevented the occupation of the Weldon Railroad. These rapid and distant movements also fatigue and exhaust our men, greatly impairing their efficiency in battle. It is not necessary, however, to enumerate all the reasons for recruiting our ranks. The necessity is as well known to Your Excellency as to myself, and as much the object of your solicitude. The means of obtaining men for field duty, as far as I can see, are only three: A considerable number could be placed in the ranks by relieving all able-bodied white men employed as teamsters, cooks, mechanics, and laborers, and supplying their places with negroes. I think measures should be taken at once to substitute negroes for whites in every place in the army or connected with it where the former can be used. It seems to me that we must choose between employing negroes ourselves and having them employed against us. A thorough and vigorous inspection of the rolls of exempted and detailed men is in my opinion of immediate importance. I think you will agree with me that no man should be excused from service for any reason not deemed sufficient to entitle one already in service to his discharge. I do not think that the decision of such questions can be made so well by any as by those whose experience with troops has made them acquainted with the urgent claims to relief which are constantly brought to the attention of commanding officers, but which they are forced to deny. For this reason I would recommend that the rolls of exempts and details in each State be inspected by officers of character and influence who have had experience in the field and have had nothing to do with the exemptions and details. If all that I have heard be true, I think it will be found that very different rules of action have been pursued toward men in service and those liable to it in the matter of exemptions and details, and I respectfully recommend that Your Excellency cause reports to be made by the enrolling bureau of the number of men enrolled

in each State, the number sent to the field, and the number exempted or detailed. I regard this matter as of the utmost moment. Our ranks are constantly diminishing by battle and disease, and few recruits are received. The consequences are inevitable, and I feel confident that the time has come when no man capable of bearing arms should be excused unless it be for some controlling reason of public necessity. The safety of the country requires this, in my judgment, and hardship to individuals must be disregarded in view of the calamity that would follow to the whole people if our armies meet with disaster. No detail of an arms-bearing man should be continued or granted except for the performance of duty that is indispensable to the army, and that cannot be performed by one not liable to or fit for service. Agricultural details take numbers from the army without any corresponding advantage. I think that the interests of land-owners and cultivators may be relied upon to induce them to provide means for saving their crops if they be sent to the field. If they remain at home, their produce will only benefit the enemy, as our armies will be insufficient to defend them. If the officers and men detailed in the conscript bureau have performed their duties faithfully, they must have already brought out the chief part of those liable to duty, and have nothing to do now except to get such as from time to time reach military age. If this be true, many of these officers and men can be spared to the army. If not, they have been derelict, and should be sent back to the ranks, and their places supplied by others who will be more active. Such a policy will stimulate the energy of this class of men. The last resource is the reserve force. Men of this class can render great service in connection with regular troops by taking their places in trenches, forts, etc., and leaving them free for active operations. I think no time should be lost in bringing out the entire strength of this class, particularly in Virginia and North Carolina. If I had the reserves of Virginia to hold the trenches here, or even to man those below Richmond on the north side of the river, they would render greater service than they can in any other way. They would give me a force to act with on the offensive or defensive, as might be necessary, without weakening any part of our lines. Their mere presence in the works below Richmond would prevent the enemy from making feints in that quarter to draw troops from here, except in such force as to endanger his own lines around Petersburg. But I feel confident that with vigorous effort, and an understanding on the part of the people of the necessity of the case, we could get more of this class than enough for the purpose last indicated. We could make our regular troops here available in the field. The same remarks are applicable to the reserves of North Carolina, who could render similar services at Wilmington, and allow the regular troops to take the field against any force that might land there. I need not remind Your Excellency that the reserves are of great value in connection with our regular troops to prevent disaster, but would be of little avail to retrieve it. For this reason they

should be put in service before the numerical superiority of the enemy enables him to inflict a damaging blow upon the regular forces opposed to him. In my opinion the necessity for them will never be more urgent or their services of greater value than now. And I entertain the same views as to the importance of immediately bringing into the regular service every man liable to military duty. It will be too late to do so after our armies meet with disaster, should such, unfortunately, be the case.

I trust Your Excellency will excuse the length and earnestness of this letter in view of the vital importance of its subject, and am confident that you will do all in your power to accomplish the objects I have in view.

With great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS, PETERSBURG,
September 27, 1864.

GENERAL J. A. EARLY, commanding Valley,

GENERAL: Your letter of the 25th instant is received. I very much regret the reverses that have occurred to the army in the Valley, but trust they can be remedied. The arrival of Kershaw will add greatly to your strength, and I have such confidence in the men and officers that I am sure all will unite in the defence of the country. It will require that every one should exert all his energies and strength to meet the emergency. One victory will put all things to rights. You must do all in your power to invigorate your army. Get back all absentees—manœuvre so, if you can, as to keep the enemy in check until you can strike him with all your strength. As far as I can judge at this distance, you have operated more with divisions than with your concentrated strength. Circumstances may have rendered it necessary, but such a course is to be avoided if possible. It will require the greatest watchfulness, the greatest promptness, and the most untiring energy on your part to arrest the progress of the enemy in his present tide of success. All the reserves in the Valley have been ordered to you. Breckenridge will join you or co-operate as circumstances will permit with all his force. Rosser left this morning for Burkeville (intersection of Danville and Southside Railroads), whence he will shape his course as you direct. I have given you all I can. You must use the resources you have so as to gain success. The enemy must be defeated, and I rely upon you to do it. I will endeavor to have shoes, arms, and ammunition supplied you. Set all your officers to work bravely and hopefully, and all will go well. As regards the Western cavalry, I think for the present the best thing you can do is to separate it. Perhaps there is a lack of confidence between officers and men. If you will attach one brigade to Rosser, making him a division, and one to Fitz Lee's division under Wickham, Lomax will be able, I hope, to

bring out the rest. The men are all good, and only require instruction and discipline. The enemy's force cannot be so greatly superior to yours. His effective infantry I do not think exceeds 12,000 men. We are obliged to fight against great odds. A kind Providence will yet overrule everything for our good. If Colonel Carter's wound incapacitates him for duty, you must select a good chief of artillery for the present.

Wishing you every prosperity and success,

I am very truly yours,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
Oct. 21, 1864.

HON. SEC. OF WAR, RICHMOND,

SIR: I consider it very important to supply the garrisons in the forts below Wilmington with thirty days' provisions, in case the enemy should succeed in cutting them off from the city. I directed General Whiting to endeavor to obtain provisions for the purpose in North Carolina, but he has not succeeded in doing so, nor do I know that it is in his power. The amount of subsistence issued to the army in Virginia and North Carolina is not sufficient to enable us to retain what is required for these garrisons for the time indicated. We now get bacon for the troops only once in four days, and the commissary department informed Colonel Cole, chief C. S. of the army, that we must rely on cattle. As the collection of supplies is in the hands of the officers of the C. S. department, Colonel Cole does not know what number of cattle or what amount of provisions he can count upon, so as to make any arrangements to provide for those garrisons from stores that may come into their hands. I think that it would be better that the C. S. department should provide the desired supplies if practicable, and I respectfully ask that you will direct that it be done if it be in the power of that department to accomplish it.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
Oct. 24, 1864.

CAPTAIN J. K. MITCHELL, Flag-officer commanding James River Squadron,

CAPTAIN: Your letter of the 23d instant is received, and in compliance with your request I will give you my views as to the service I deem important to be rendered by the navy in the present posture of affairs.

In my opinion, the enemy is already as near Richmond as he can be allowed to come with safety, and it is certain that the defence of the city would be easier did our lines extend lower down the river, and becomes more difficult the farther we are compelled to retire.

If the enemy succeeds in throwing a force to the south bank in rear of General Pickett's lines, it will necessitate not only the withdrawal of General P.'s forces, but also the abandonment of Petersburg and its railroad connections, throwing the whole army back to the defences of Richmond.

I should regard this as a great disaster and as seriously endangering the safety of the city. We should not only lose a large section of country from which our position around Petersburg enables us to draw supplies, but the enemy would be brought nearer to the only remaining line of railway communication between Richmond and the South, upon which the whole army, as well as the population of the city, would have to depend mainly for support. It would make the tenure of the city depend upon our ability to hold this long line of communication against the largely superior forces of the enemy, and, I think, would greatly diminish our prospects of successful defence. It is therefore, in my judgment, a matter of the first moment to prevent such a movement on the part of the enemy; and I do not know what emergency can arise in the future defence of the city which will more require all the efforts of the army and navy than that which now exists.

I fully appreciate the importance of preserving our fleet, and deprecate any unnecessary exposure of it. But you will perceive the magnitude of the service which it is thought you can render, and determine whether it is sufficient to justify the risk. It is true that the enemy might place torpedoes in your rear while the vessels are on guard down the river at night; but if you retire it is much easier for him to place them in the river below you, so as to prevent your going down altogether, no matter how great the necessity for your presence below might become. It is therefore very desirable to guard the river as effectually as we can, and I think it can be done so as greatly to diminish the chance of the enemy laying torpedoes if our ironclads can go down as far as Bishop's every night and picket in their rear with small boats and some of the light gunboats.

Our pickets on the north bank extend about half a mile below the lowest battery, and will be able to afford some assistance, as will also those on the south bank. A system of signals should be agreed upon between them and the fleet to give timely notice of any attempt of the enemy to approach the river or launch boats.

We have not sufficient force to picket the banks more effectually. Our batteries on the south side would also tend to deter the enemy from making the attempt you apprehend, and could afford assistance to the fleet.

You of course can best judge of your ability to render the service required.

I can only express my views of its importance, and I trust that if the Department can increase your force of men, or in any other way contribute to render you able to perform this important duty, it will be done. As I said before, I can foresee no state of circumstances in which the fleet can render more important aid in the defence of Richmond than at present by guarding the river below Chaffin's Bluff.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE,
General.

*Organization of the Army of Northern Virginia, commanded by
GENERAL R. E. LEE; November 30, 1864.**

FIRST ARMY CORPS.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL J. LONGSTREET commanding.

PICKETT'S DIVISION.

Major-general George E. Pickett.

Stewart's Brigade.

Brigadier-general George H. Stewart.

9th Virginia, Colonel J. J. Phillips.
14th Virginia, Colonel William White.
38th Virginia, Colonel George K. Griggs.
53d Virginia, Colonel W. R. Aylett.
57th Virginia, Colonel C. R. Fontaine.

Corse's Brigade.

Brigadier-general M. D. Corse.

15th Virginia, Lieut.-col. E. M. Morrison.
17th Virginia, Colonel Arthur Herbert.
29th Virginia, Colonel James Giles.
30th Virginia, Colonel R. S. Chew.
32d Virginia, Colonel E. B. Montague.

Hunton's Brigade.

Brigadier-general Eppa Hunton.

8th Virginia, Colonel E. Berkeley.
18th Virginia, Colonel H. A. Carrington.
19th Virginia, Colonel Henry Gantt.
28th Virginia, Lt.-col. W. L. Wingfield.
56th Virginia, Colonel Wm. E. Green.

Terry's Brigade.

Brigadier-general William R. Terry.

1st Virginia, Lieut.-col. F. H. Langley.
3d Virginia, Colonel Joseph Mayo, Jr.
7th Virginia, Colonel C. C. Flowerree.
11th Virginia, Captain J. H. Smith.
24th Virginia, Captain W. W. Bentley.

FIELD'S DIVISION.

Major-general C. W. Field.

Anderson's Brigade.

Brigadier-general G. T. Anderson.

7th Georgia, Major John F. Kiser.
8th Georgia, Colonel John R. Towers.
9th Georgia, Captain S. A. Jameson.
11th Georgia, Colonel F. H. Little.
59th Georgia, Lieut.-col. B. H. Gee.

Law's Brigade.

Colonel W. F. Perry.

4th Alabama, Captain A. D. McInnis.
15th Alabama, Captain F. K. Schaaf.
44th Alabama, Lieut.-col. John A. Jones.
47th Alabama, Captain H. C. Lindsey.
48th Alabama, Major J. W. Wiggonton.

* Compiled from inspection reports when not otherwise indicated.

Gregg's Brigade.

Colonel F. S. Bass.

3d Arkansas, Lieut.-col. R. S. Taylor.
 1st Texas, Captain Wm. A. Bedell.
 4th Texas, Lieut.-col. C. M. Winkler.
 5th Texas, Captain W. T. Hill.

Benning's Brigade.

Brigadier-general H. L. Benning.

2d Georgia, Captain Thos. Chaffin.
 15th Georgia, Captain G. A. Pace.
 17th Georgia, Lieut.-col. W. A. Barden.
 20th Georgia, Lieut.-col. E. M. Seago.

Bratton's Brigade.

Brigadier-general John Bratton.

1st South Carolina, Colonel J. R. Hagood.
 2d South Carolina [Rifles], Colonel R. E. Bowen.
 5th South Carolina, Colonel A. Coward.
 6th South Carolina, Colonel J. M. Steedman.
 Palmetto Sharpshooters, Colonel Joseph Walker.

KERSHAW'S DIVISION.

Major-general J. B. Kershaw.

Wofford's Brigade.

Colonel C. C. Sanders.

16th Georgia, Major J. H. Skelton.*
 18th Georgia, Colonel Joseph Armstrong.
 24th Georgia, Colonel C. C. Sanders.
 3d Georgia Battalion (Sharpshooters), Lt.-col. N. L. Hutchins.
 Cobb's Legion, Lieut.-col. L. J. Glenn.*
 Phillips's Legion, Lieut.-col. J. Hamilton.*

Humphreys's Brigade.

Major G. B. Gerald.

13th Mississippi, Major G. L. Donald.
 17th Mississippi, Captain J. C. Cochran.
 18th Mississippi, Lieut. Wm. Baskin.
 21st Mississippi, Captain W. H. Dudley.

Bryan's Brigade.

Colonel James P. Simms.

10th Georgia, Colonel W. C. Holt.*
 50th Georgia, Colonel P. McGlashan.*
 51st Georgia, Lieut.-col. James Dickey.
 53d Georgia, Lieut.-col. W. F. Hartsfield.

Conner's Brigade.

Colonel John D. Kennedy.

2d South Carolina, Captain J. D. Graham.
 3d South Carolina, Capt. J. K. G. Nance.
 7th South Carolina, Captain E. J. Goggans.
 8th South Carolina, Captain A. T. Harlee.
 15th South Carolina, Major F. S. Lewie.
 20th South Carolina, Major J. M. Partlow.
 3d S. C. Batt., Captain P. F. Spofford.

SECOND ARMY CORPS.†

THIRD ARMY CORPS.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL A. P. HILL commanding

MAHONE'S DIVISION.

Major-general William Mahone.

Sanders's Brigade.

Colonel Wm. H. Forney.

8th Alabama, Lieut.-col. John P. Emrich.
 9th Alabama, Colonel J. H. King.
 10th Alabama, Captain C. W. Brewton.
 11th Alabama, Colonel G. E. Tayloe.
 14th Alabama, Captain S. G. Perry.

Weisiger's Brigade.

Brigadier-general D. A. Weisiger.

6th Virginia, Colonel George T. Rogers.
 12th Virginia, Major J. R. Lewellen.
 16th Virginia, Captain S. B. Eley.
 41st Virginia, Major W. H. Etheredge.
 61st Virginia, Lieut.-col. W. H. Stewart.

* Reported absent on inspection reports, and actual commanders of their regiments not indicated.

† See Army Valley District, following.